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ABSTRACT

A story, as told by two migrant children to their classmates, begins with the loss of their father's job in Puerto Rico, and continues with the circumstances surrounding their move to Connecticut, the airplane flight to the United States, their first home on a tobacco farm, their move to the neighboring city, and ends as the bell rings for their next class. Black and white drawings illustrate the story. Appended are seven language arts activities: putting events in sequence, synonyms, antonyms, alphabetical order, writing a paragraph, finding mistakes, and scrambled words. (AH)

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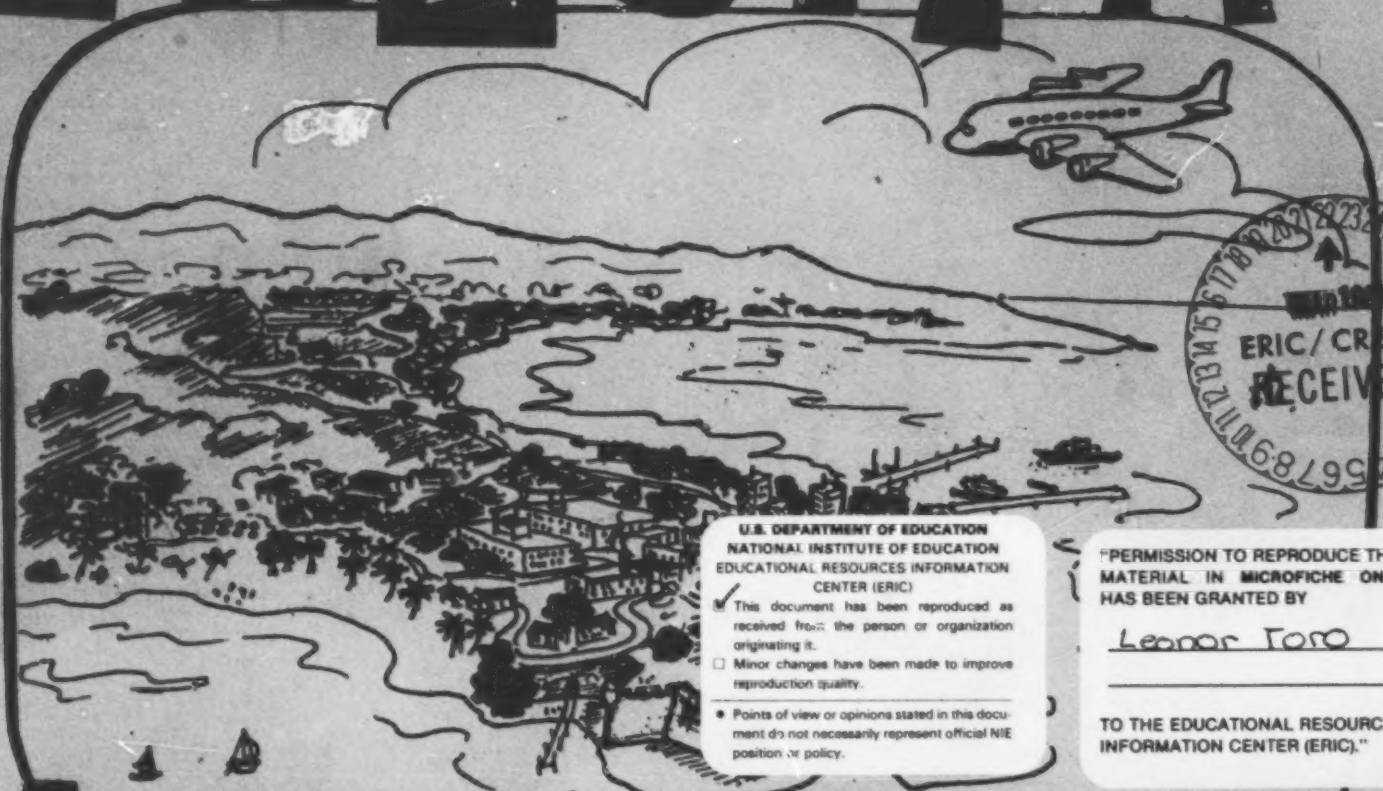
TERESITA AND CARLITOS



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TERESITA AND CARLITOS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
One	1
Two	4
Three	5
Four	7
Five	9
Six	12
Seven	15
Eight	17
Nine	21

Activities

1 - Putting Events in Sequence	25
2 - Synonyms	26
3 - Antonyms	27
4 - Alphabetical Order	28
5 - Writing a Paragraph	29
6 - Finding Mistakes	30
7 - Scrambled Words	31

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Hartford, Connecticut 1979

Mr. Reinaldo Matos, Director of the Connecticut Migratory Children's Program
Connecticut State Department of Education

CHAPTER ONE

One bright, spring morning a group of children were sitting in a schoolyard in Bridgeport enjoying the warm sunshine before the school bell rang. Two of the children, Teresita and Carlitos, were telling their friends how and why they moved to Connecticut from Puerto Rico.

More than a year ago, Carlitos and Teresita had left their town of Aguas Buenas in Puerto Rico. They had lived in a village called Güaragüao with their mother, Juana Santiago, and their father, Anastasio Gonzáles.

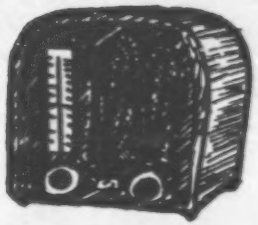
They remembered the happy singing of the little birds in the fresh country air and the bright beauty of the flamboyan and ceiba trees. There were many things they missed about Puerto Rico.

"But then Papa lost his job and became very sad," said Teresita.

"Papa worked as a sharecropper on a farm that was owned by a man named Don Pepe," added Carlitos.

Teresita explained to the other children that a sharecropper is a person who plants and cares for the crops on farmland that belongs to someone else. Then, when the crops are harvested and sold, the sharecropper and the owner of the farm divide the money.

"One day Don Pepe sold his farm and my father lost his job. My mother began to wash and iron clothes for other people in order to earn money," continued Teresita.



CHAPTER TWO

Teresita went on telling their story as the children listened with interest...

One day Papa heard on the radio that farm workers were needed in the United States to help with the harvesting. Papa was very interested in this news.

"If I could just be hired as a farm worker in the United States, things would change for us," Papa told Mama.

The radio announcer said to go to the Department of Labor in Agua Buenas to find out more information about the jobs.

"Tomorrow we will go to the Department of Labor," decided Papa.

CHAPTER THREE

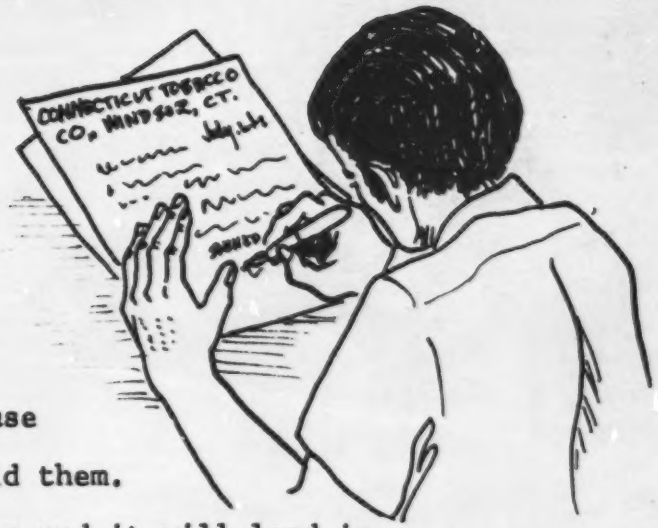
The children were listening closely. Everyone wanted to know what happened next...

Early the next morning, Mama and Papa went to the Department of Labor. They talked to a man named Mr. Hernández. Mr. Hernández told them that there were not enough workers on the apple, tomato, and tobacco farms in Connecticut. Many men were being hired to work there.

"If you decide to go to Connecticut to work, they will give you and your family a house to live in," explained Mr. Hernández.

After talking it over, Mama and Papa decided to accept the job. They were nervous because it would not be easy to leave their friends and home in Puerto Rico. But they were also excited. Papa would have a job again, and the family would have a house to live in.

So Papa signed all the papers.
He chose to work on a tobacco farm.
He had grown some tobacco on Don Pepe's farm
so he knew something about it. He learned
that he would be working for the Connecticut
Tobacco Company of Windsor.



"You must be able to leave on Saturday because
the harvest is ready to begin," Mr. Hernández told them.
"Your airplane will leave at 1:30 in the afternoon and it will land in
Hartford, Connecticut at 6:30 in the evening. There will be someone there
to meet you," he added.

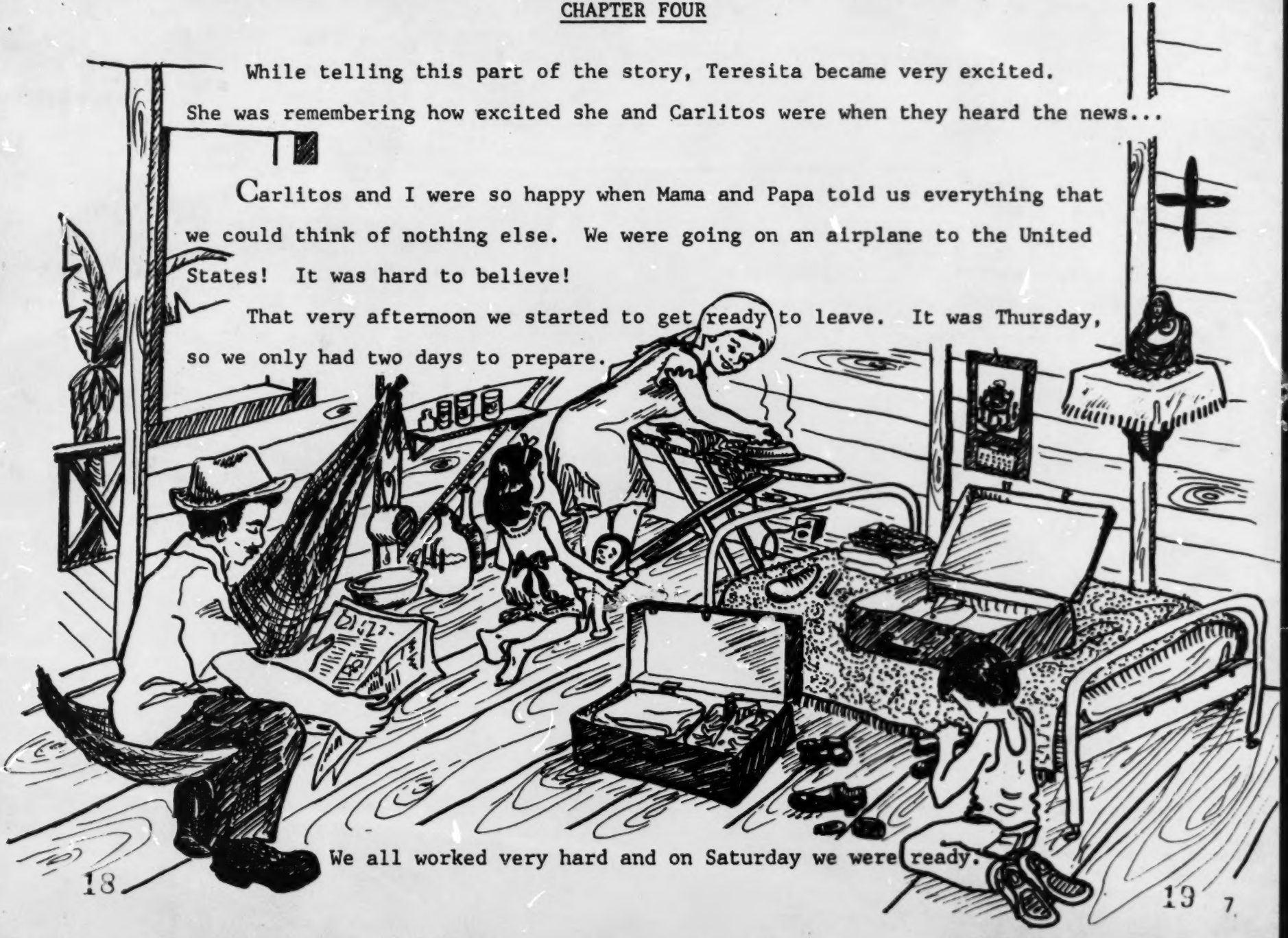
Mama and Papa thanked Mr. Hernández and then rushed home to tell us
the good news.

CHAPTER FOUR

While telling this part of the story, Teresita became very excited. She was remembering how excited she and Carlitos were when they heard the news...

Carlitos and I were so happy when Mama and Papa told us everything that we could think of nothing else. We were going on an airplane to the United States! It was hard to believe!

That very afternoon we started to get ready to leave. It was Thursday, so we only had two days to prepare.



We all worked very hard and on Saturday we were ready.

Manuel, a friend of Papa's, drove us to the airport. There wasn't much time so we quickly said goodbye to Manuel.

"Goodbye and good luck," cried Manuel as we hurried off to the airplane.

20

21

When we got on the airplane, Carlitos and I stayed very close to Mama and Papa. We had never been on an airplane before. Seeing San Juan from the clouds seemed like a dream. After several hours, the pilot said we were about to land in Hartford.

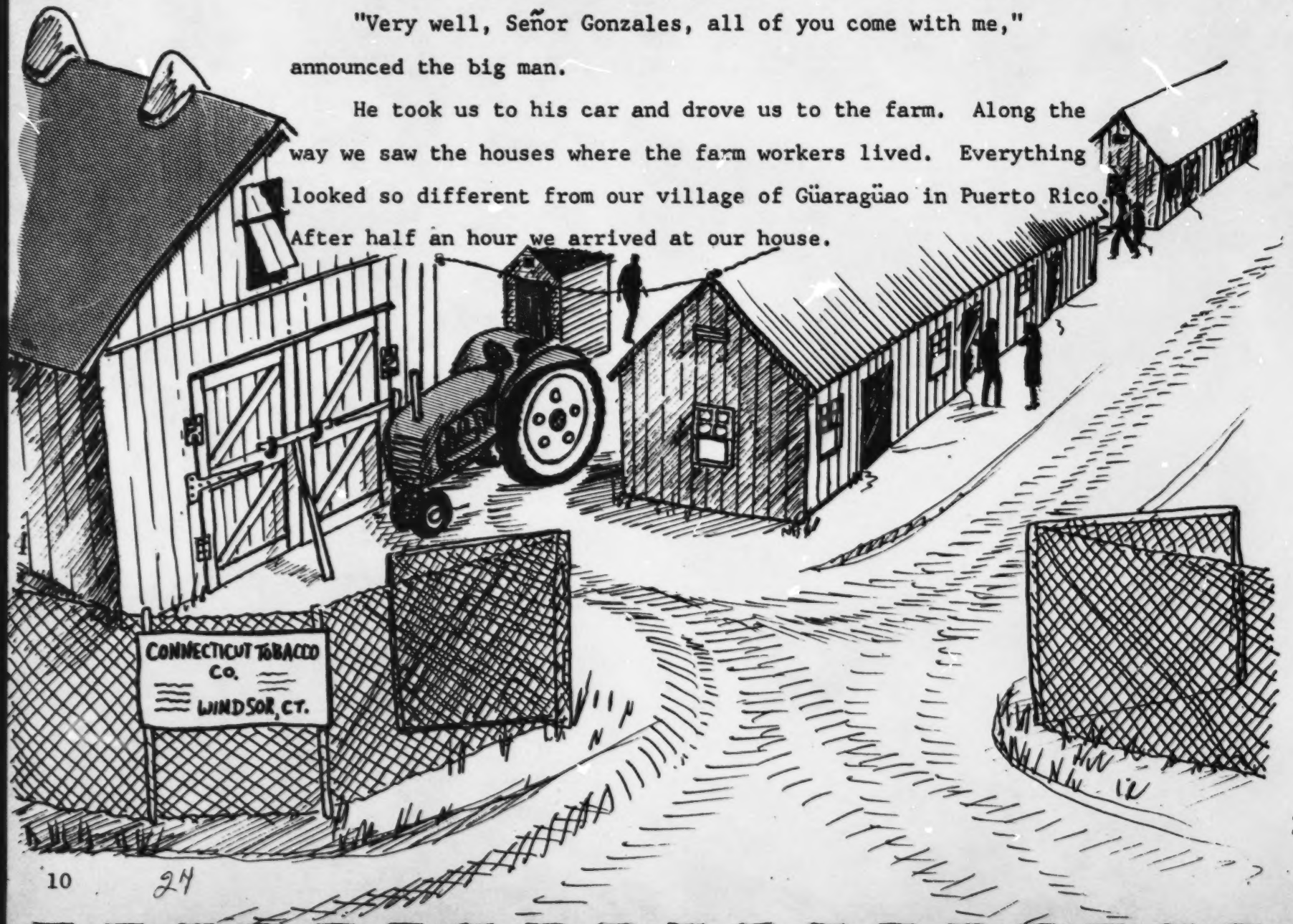
CHAPTER FIVE

After we landed and went into the airport building, we waited for the person who was supposed to meet us. Soon he came. He was the foreman of the farm where Papa would work. He was a very fat man--so fat that Carlitos and I were frightened by the sight of him. He wore a cream-colored suit and a dark brown shirt and tie. He also wore a hat the same color as his suit. But there was something that made us want to laugh--the huge cigar in his mouth! It blew more smoke than a chimney!

Papa gave the foreman the papers he had signed in Puerto Rico.

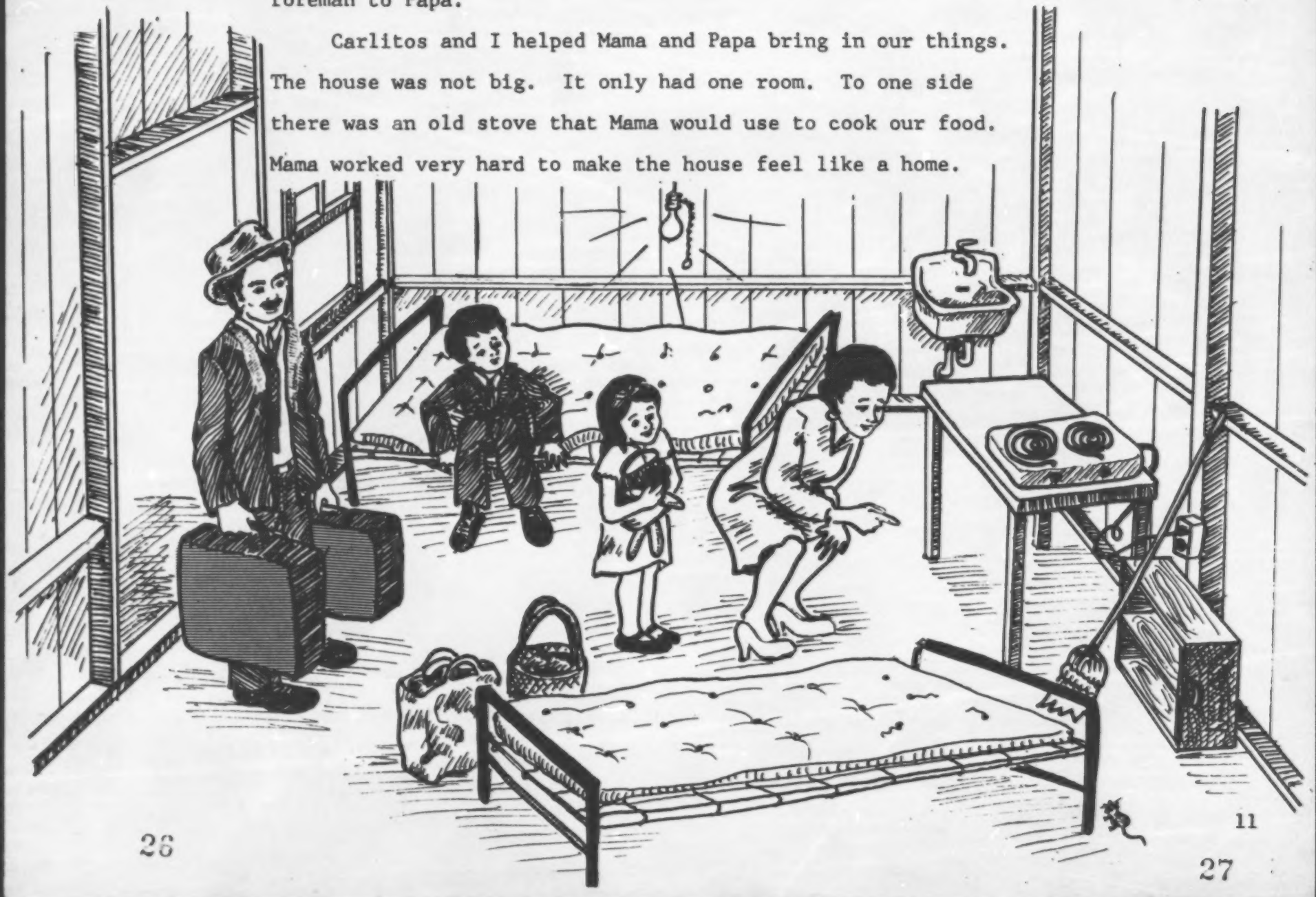
"Very well, Señor Gonzales, all of you come with me," announced the big man.

He took us to his car and drove us to the farm. Along the way we saw the houses where the farm workers lived. Everything looked so different from our village of Güaragüao in Puerto Rico. After half an hour we arrived at our house.



"As you can see, this is your house, Anastasio," said the foreman to Papa.

Carlitos and I helped Mama and Papa bring in our things. The house was not big. It only had one room. To one side there was an old stove that Mama would use to cook our food. Mama worked very hard to make the house feel like a home.



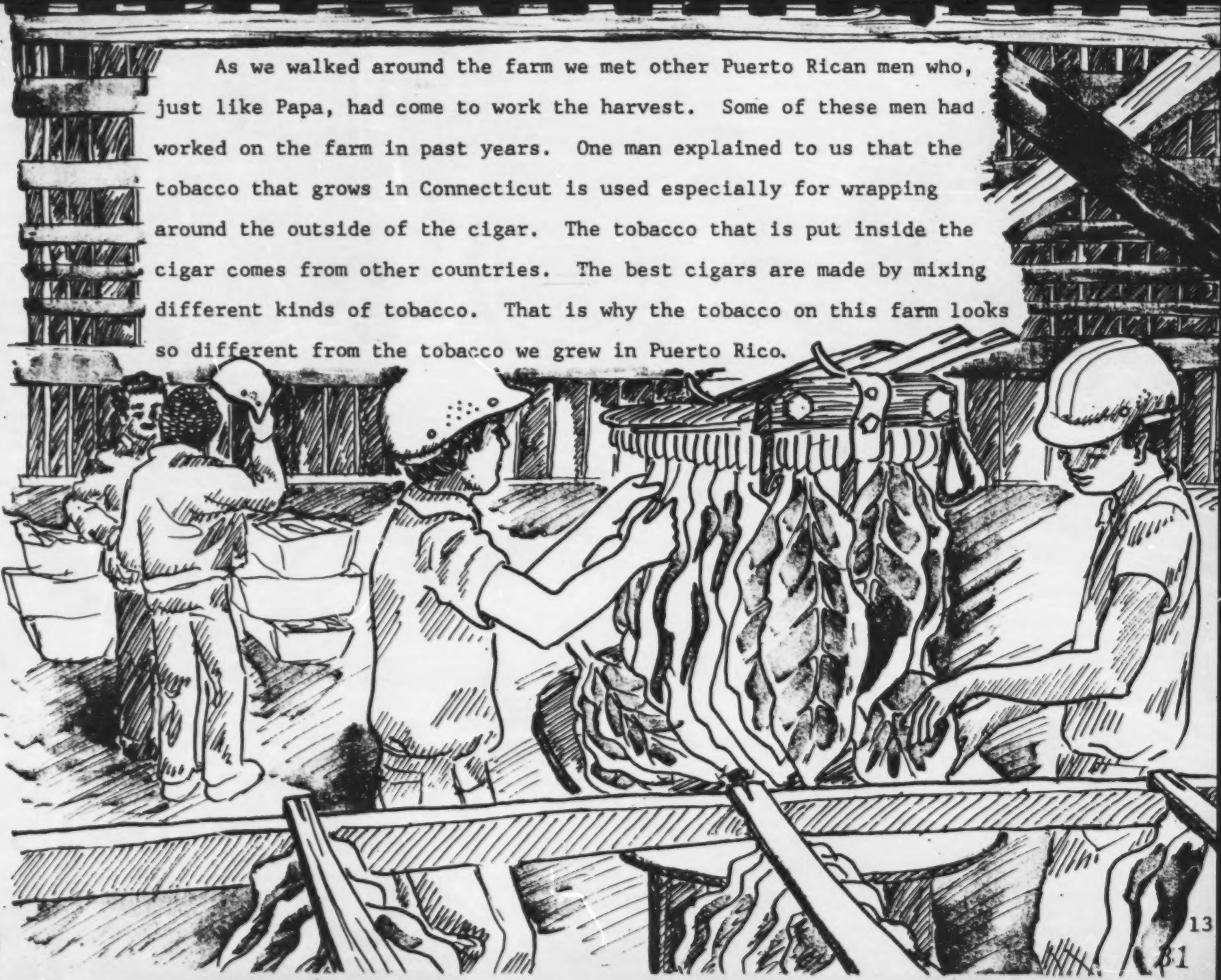
CHAPTER SIX

By this time Carlitos was getting impatient listening to his sister tell their story. He was anxious to continue it himself. So he went on...

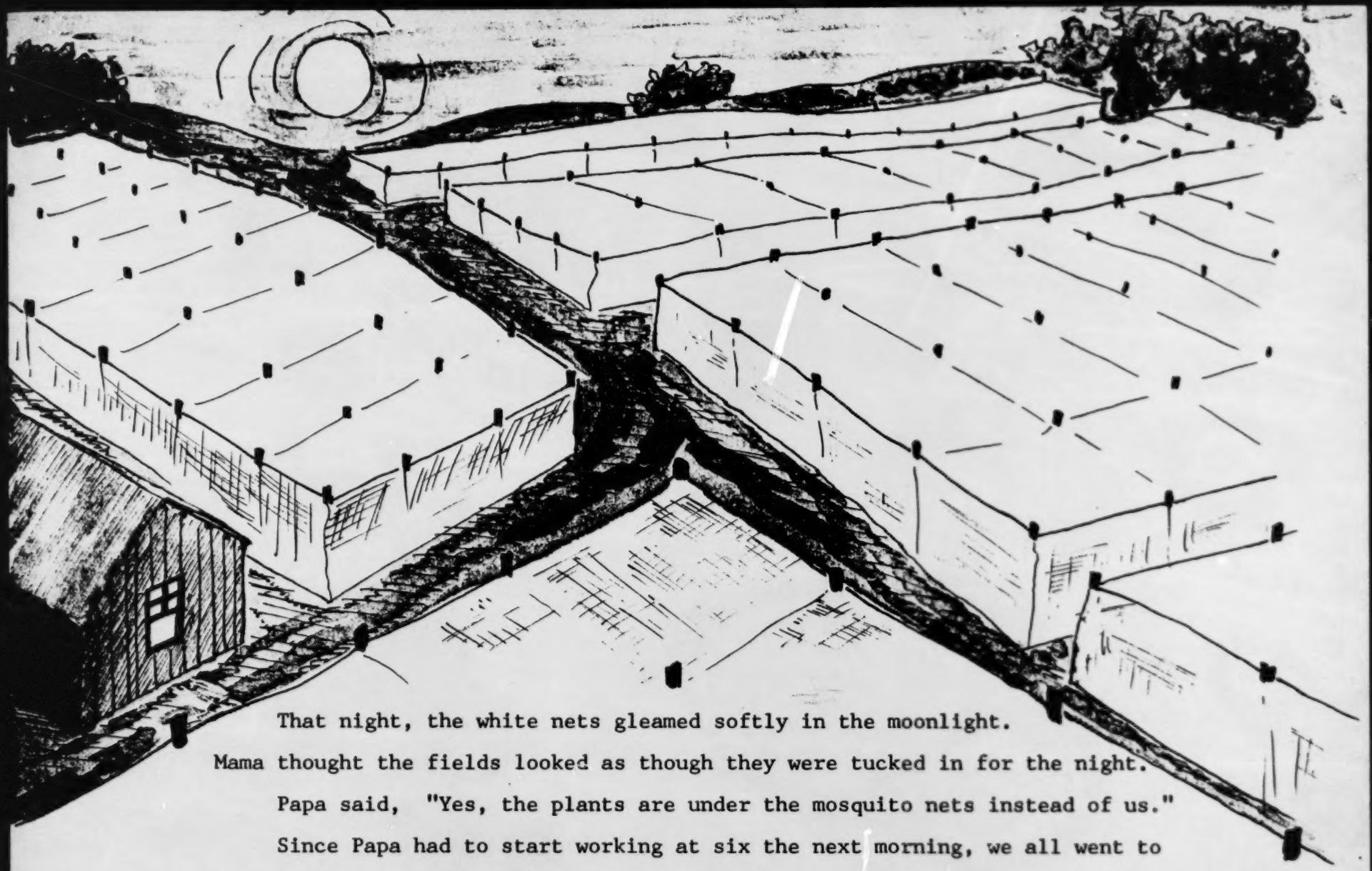
The next day was Sunday so we all went to see the farm and the crops of tobacco. It was difficult to see the tobacco plants at first. They were shaded from the sun by huge white nets hung on tall posts. It felt like we were crawling into a great tent. One thing that astonished us all was the size of the tobacco plants.

"Papa, look how different these leaves are from the ones you grew in Puerto Rico!" exclaimed Teresita.

Tobacco plants in Puerto Rico were no more than 4½ feet high. But we were looking at plants that were 6 or 7 feet high!



As we walked around the farm we met other Puerto Rican men who, just like Papa, had come to work the harvest. Some of these men had worked on the farm in past years. One man explained to us that the tobacco that grows in Connecticut is used especially for wrapping around the outside of the cigar. The tobacco that is put inside the cigar comes from other countries. The best cigars are made by mixing different kinds of tobacco. That is why the tobacco on this farm looks so different from the tobacco we grew in Puerto Rico.



That night, the white nets gleamed softly in the moonlight. Mama thought the fields looked as though they were tucked in for the night.

Papa said, "Yes, the plants are under the mosquito nets instead of us."

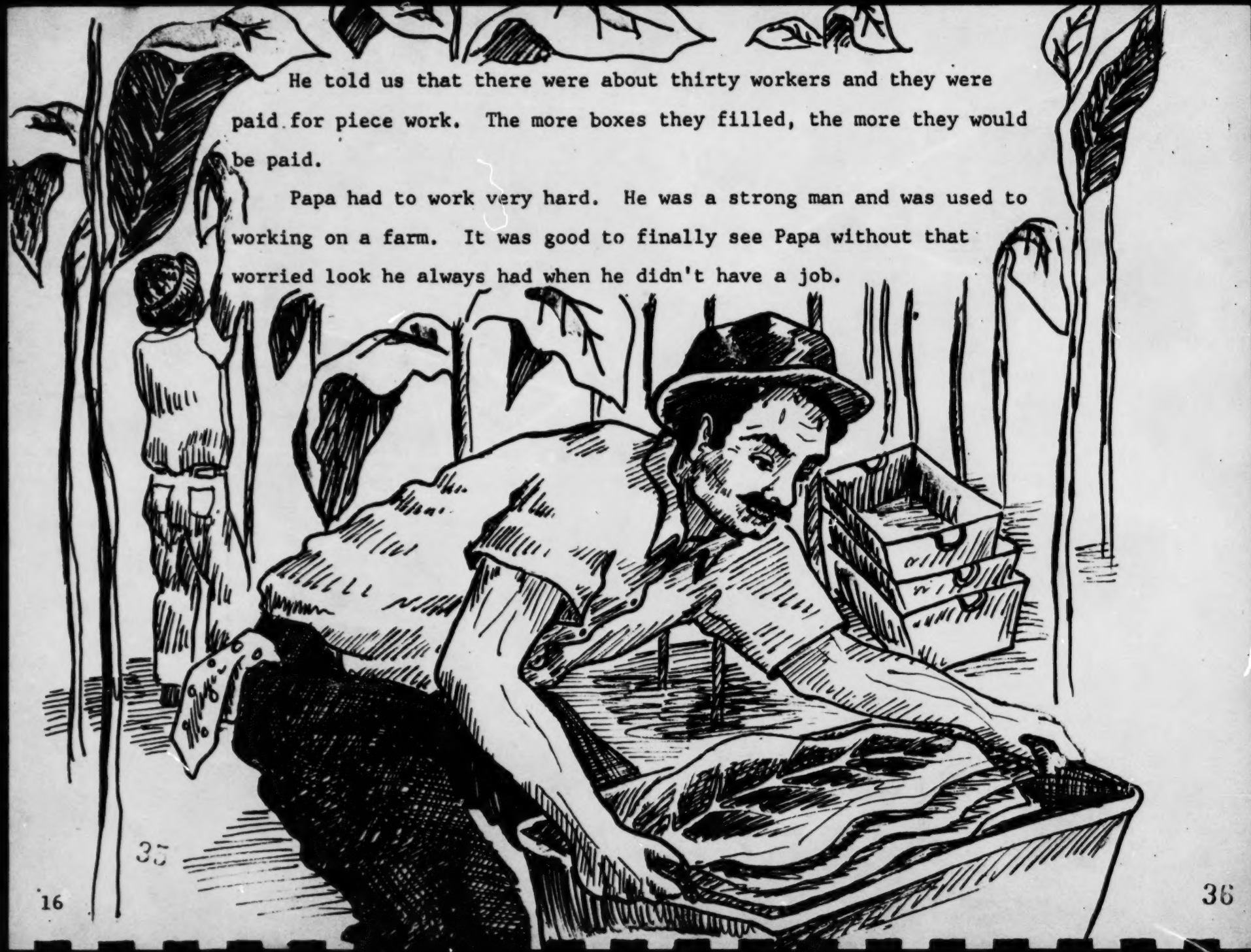
Since Papa had to start working at six the next morning, we all went to sleep early. We were tired from our first day in Connecticut, and we were excited that Papa would be working tomorrow.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The children were very interested in hearing about the tobacco farm. Most of them had never been on any kind of farm before, and they wanted to know what it was like. Carlitos was enjoying telling his story...

Early the next morning, Papa went off to work. At the end of the day when he came home we wanted to know all the details of his day. Papa looked very tired.

"When I arrived I saw a truck loaded with many large boxes," Papa explained to us. "We were to use these to collect the tobacco leaves," he continued.



He told us that there were about thirty workers and they were paid for piece work. The more boxes they filled, the more they would be paid.

Papa had to work very hard. He was a strong man and was used to working on a farm. It was good to finally see Papa without that worried look he always had when he didn't have a job.

35

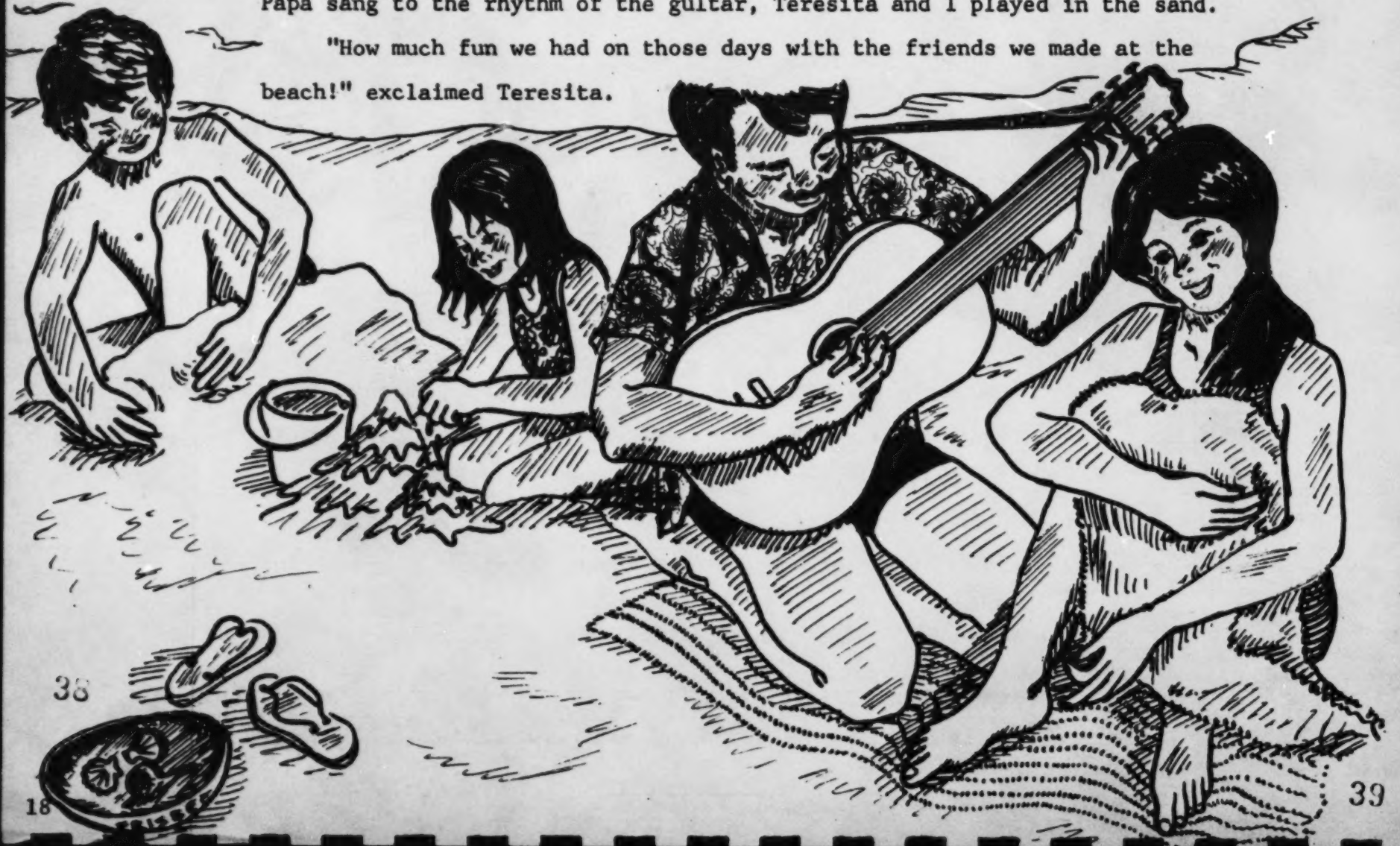
CHAPTER EIGHT

"But how did you get here to Bridgeport if your father worked on a farm near Hartford?" one of the children asked. Carlitos went on with the story.

Papa continued working on the farm along with his companions. Some of his friends told him about a city named Bridgeport. Papa took us there, and little by little we became very familiar with it. Soon we were going to Bridgeport every weekend. Sometimes we went to a restaurant called "La Cagueña." We loved to eat there because they serve many Puerto Rican dishes that we missed so much. We enjoyed delicious and tasty things such as frituras and cuchifritos and mondongo.

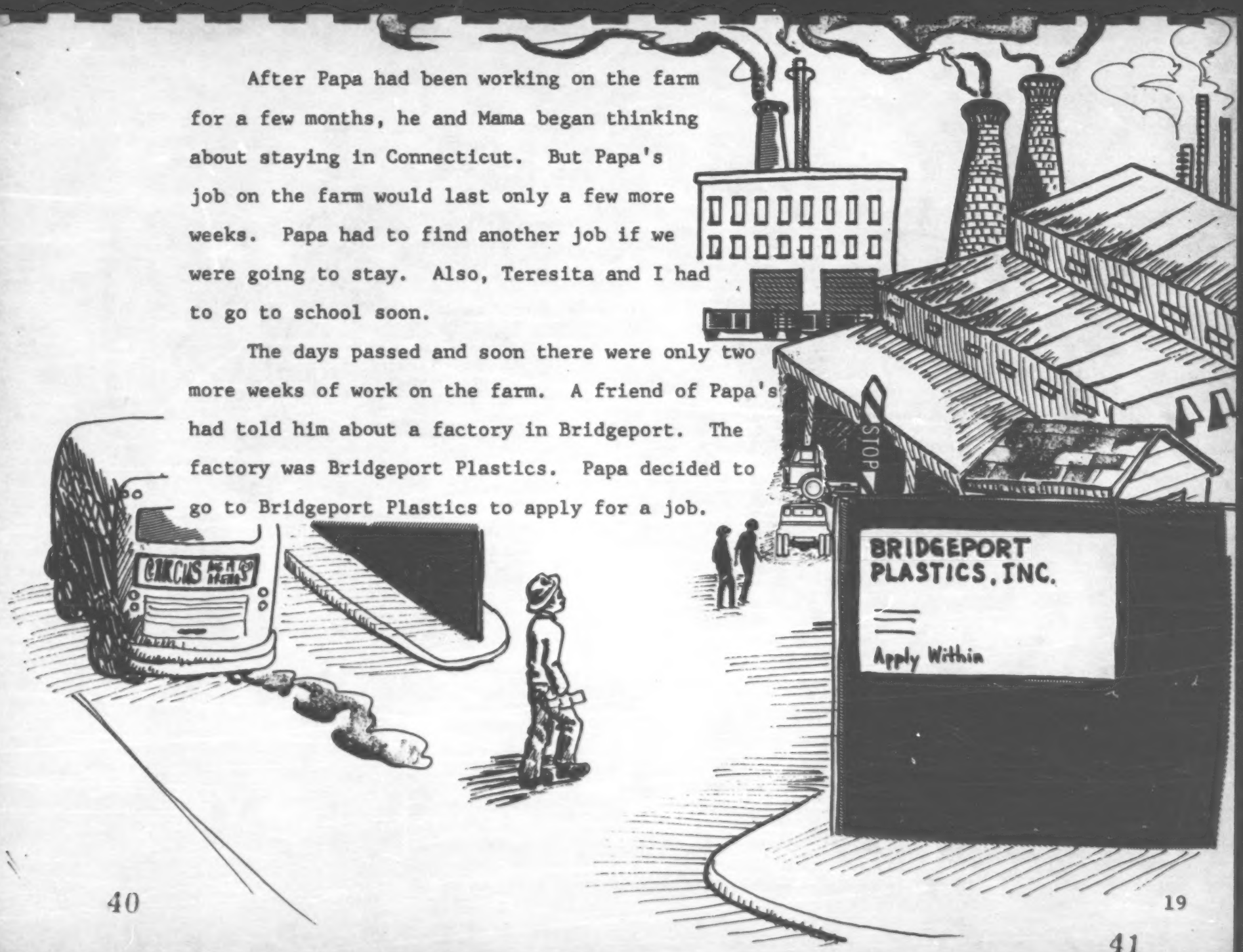
We also enjoyed going to the beach near Bridgeport--a beach called Seaside Park. Papa always brought his guitar and with it improvised songs that reminded us of our faraway home of Puerto Rico. As Mama and Papa sang to the rhythm of the guitar, Teresita and I played in the sand.

"How much fun we had on those days with the friends we made at the beach!" exclaimed Teresita.



After Papa had been working on the farm for a few months, he and Mama began thinking about staying in Connecticut. But Papa's job on the farm would last only a few more weeks. Papa had to find another job if we were going to stay. Also, Teresita and I had to go to school soon.

The days passed and soon there were only two more weeks of work on the farm. A friend of Papa's had told him about a factory in Bridgeport. The factory was Bridgeport Plastics. Papa decided to go to Bridgeport Plastics to apply for a job.



Papa had good luck. As soon as his work on the farm was finished he received a letter from Bridgeport Plastics. They wanted him to start work the next week! How happy we all were!

CHAPTER NINE

So we moved to Bridgeport and Teresita and I started school here. Papa told us to always study hard. He wants us to have a good education so that we will have more chances for better jobs when we grow up.

Since Papa started working in the factory, many good things have happened. Papa found a good apartment for us in Bridgeport. Now it is much easier for Mama to make a comfortable home for all of us. Teresita and I are happy in school and are learning to speak English. And Papa is very pleased with his job.

Last Christmas Mama and Papa celebrated our good fortune. Mama cooked lots of delicious food, like pasteles, arroz con gandules, and lechón azado. Papa played the guitar while his friends accompanied him on the güiro, the cuatro, and maracas. The fun Christmas presents and the lively songs gave us the feeling of being in Puerto Rico. It was a very happy party.

As Teresita and Carlitos were finishing their story, the bell rang. The children had all been so interested in the story that Carlitos and Teresita were telling that they almost forgot about school. When they heard the bell, though, they all jumped up and ran into the building. Carlitos and Teresita went in together, happily thinking of their good fortune.

ACTIVITY 1

PUTTING EVENTS IN SEQUENCE

The important events of the story are listed below, but they are not in the right order. See if you can put them in the correct order by numbering them from 1 to 6. Number 1 goes next to the first thing that happened, and so on.

_____ The family went to Hartford, Connecticut on an airplane.

_____ Papa got a job at Bridgeport Plastics.

_____ Papa lost his job on Don Pepe's farm.

_____ Papa told about his first day of work on the tobacco farm.

_____ There was a party to celebrate the family's good fortune.

_____ Mama and Papa went to the Department of Labor in Agua Buenas.

ACTIVITY 2

SYNONYMS

Some words have meanings that are the same. We call these words "synonyms." Match the words on the tobacco leaves with their synonyms in the tobacco boxes. The first one is done as an example.

ACTIVITY 3

ANTONYMS

Words that have opposite meanings are called "antonyms." Many of the words used in the story of Carlitos and Teresita have opposites. Below are some pairs of antonyms. Draw lines to match them. Remember, antonyms are words that are opposite!

early	never
far	boring
bright	near
always	many
pretty	dark
exciting	remember
few	late
forget	ugly

Now, try to write the antonym of each of the following words taken from the sto

warm _____ easy _____ big _____

happy _____ begin _____ different _____

work _____ quickly _____ fat _____

ACTIVITY 4

ALPHABETICAL ORDER

When we look up words in a dictionary, we must know the correct alphabetical order. We look at the first letter of the word. Sometimes, though, we have words that begin with the same letter. When this happens, we must look at the second letter in each word. Try the activities below. Do them in alphabetical order.

A

Put these words in alphabetical order by looking at the second letter:

tobacco _____

Thursday _____

Teresita _____

trees _____

time _____

tasty _____

B

Now put these words in alphabetical order. Look at the first letters to begin. You may have to look at the second letter in some words:

flamboyán _____

cuchifritos _____

frituras _____

Ceiba _____

harvest _____

sharecropper _____

Saturday _____

cigar _____

announcer _____

astonished _____

ACTIVITY
5 WRITING A PARAGRAPH

When the Gonzáles family moved from the tobacco farm to Bridgeport, many things changed. On the tobacco farm they lived out in the country, and in Bridgeport they lived in a big city. Think of some of the differences they experienced. Which do you think you would like better--living on the tobacco farm or living in a city like Bridgeport? Why?

Write a paragraph telling which you would like better.

Be sure to give your reasons.

ACTIVITY 6

FINDING MISTAKES

In the short story below, there are some mistakes. Some are spelling mistakes and some are punctuation mistakes. Take a pencil and put in the correct punctuation marks (don't forget about capital letters!). Cross out the misspelled words and letters and write them correctly. How many mistakes can you find? You will have to read very carefully. (Hint: There are 11 mistakes in all.)

> Connecticut is a state It is part of New England. the Gonzales family moved to Connecticut from puerto rico They travelled by airplain. They lived in Agua Buenas Hartford and Bridgeport. Teresita and carlitos told the storrey. Do you have a story to tell

Here's how the story should look:

Connecticut is a state. It is part of New England. The Gonzales family moved to Connecticut from Puerto Rico. They travelled by airplane. They lived in Agua Buenas, Hartford, and Bridgeport. Teresita and Carlitos told the story. Do you have a story to tell?

ACTIVITY 7

SCRAMBLED WORDS

The following words are taken from the story, but the letters are all mixed up. See if you can unscramble them.

		Clues:
obacotc	_____	What cigars are made of
tuairg	_____	The instrument that Mr. Gonzales played
moblayanf	_____	A beautiful tree that grows in Puerto Rico
epaliarn	_____	How Teresita and Carlitos travelled from Puerto Rico to Connecticut
saldin	_____	A body of land surrounded by water (Puerto Rico is one)
foctayr	_____	The kind of place that Mr. Gonzales worked in in Bridgeport
noftuer	_____	Luck; the last word of the story.